

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

BRAC 2005: IMPROVING RECEPTION

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ABSTRACT

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The Department of Defense has begun preparations for the next round of Base Realignment and Closure in 2005. At the same time, communities, cities, and states have begun their efforts to "BRAC-proof" their local installations. This effort at both ends of the spectrum makes the task of base closure or realignment that much more difficult, the decisions that much harder to accept, and misses an opportunity to get a jump on the reuse of the closed property. Closer integration between the military, the community, and local and state governments before, during, and after the BRAC decisions are made will minimize the pain on all parties. The fact is, excess defense infrastructure exists and the Department of Defense must determine the best way to reduce this unneeded excess while transforming the remaining infrastructure to support the future force.

BRAC 2005 will be unlike any of the previous rounds. In addition to using it to reduce excess infrastructure, the Secretary of Defense has positioned the process to be a shaping function for the future force. The major challenge facing BRAC 2005 will be in the political arena. Keeping the support of Congress to implement BRAC 2005 is critical.

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BRAC 2005: IMPROVING RECEPTION

I cannot overemphasize the importance of BRAC 2005. This effort requires the focus and prioritization only senior leadership can bring. I am confident we can produce BRAC recommendations that will advance transformation, combat effectiveness, and the efficient use of the taxpayer's money.

—Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
November 15, 2002

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is not a popular issue with the American public nor their elected officials. Closing or realigning any military installation has an immediate and sometimes lasting negative impact on the installation's surrounding community. While many may recognize the need to adapt the military infrastructure, it is the impact on the local community that raises the greatest political concern. Most see the process as a threat to their jobs, local economies, or their constituency's interests. However, the Defense Department sees the 2005 BRAC as an opportunity for more than just fiscal gain and a shedding of excess infrastructure. The Defense Department plans to use the 2005 BRAC process as a strategic shaping function to mold the future force.¹ Further, BRAC is a strategic opportunity that goes beyond shaping the military; it can potentially improve cooperation between the military and the public it serves. This paper will briefly address the history of BRAC, discuss the changing environment, the Defense Secretary's focus for BRAC 2005, the threats and challenges associated with BRAC process, and make recommendations to improve the process.

HISTORY

The BRAC process was developed as a method to handle a difficult but necessary task – reducing the military infrastructure to match the post cold-war force. Execution of this process required unpopular political decisions by members of government. The decision to close or realign a military installation in a state or congressional member's district could prove fatal to that member in the next election. Fear that voters would reflect their displeasure in the next election and the desire to shield the member from their wrath resulted in the BRAC process. Under the process, an appointed commission develops a list of closures or realignments from DoD recommendations and then submits it to Congress for approval or rejection. This semi-courageous and bi-partisan approach to base closures allowed the congressional member to do what needs to be done while minimizing their political vulnerability.

The current BRAC legislation was introduced in the 2002 defense authorization bill. However, action was postponed until 2005 because President Clinton was felt to have subverted and thus politicized the process through his decision to privatize in place two of the 1995 commission's closure recommendations. The change in status of the bases in the key voter states of Texas and California resulted in political backlash. The Republicans vowed that another round of BRAC would not occur until after President Clinton left office regardless of the need or merit.² Since its introduction, the current legislation has narrowly survived several maneuvers in the House and Senate to further postpone or kill it in its entirety. The BRAC legislation recently survived only after President Bush threatened to veto the FY2004 defense appropriations bill if it contained any attempt to repeal the 2005 BRAC round.³ For now, Congress is a reluctant participant to this process.

"The previous four BRAC rounds eliminated approximately 20 percent of DoD's capacity that existed in 1988, and through 2001, BRAC has produced a net savings of approximately \$16.7 billion, which includes the cost of environmental clean-up. Recurring savings beyond 2001 are approximately \$7 billion annually."⁴ The prime focus of these first four BRAC rounds was reducing Defense Department outlays on excess infrastructure to allow funding of other military requirements such as equipment modernization and quality of life programs.

The excess capacity that required BRAC existed because reductions in the number of troops, ships, and aircraft outpaced reductions in infrastructure. From 1989 to 2003, the Department of Defense reduced the active military force by approximately 33%. And as noted above, during the four previous BRAC rounds only 20% of the bases were closed. As a result, the Bush administration estimated that up to 25% of remaining military base capacity is surplus.⁵ This excess capacity is a drain/burden on resources that could be better used supporting other requirements. By this estimation, another round of BRAC is necessary.

BRAC IS TRANSFORMATIONAL

The BRAC legislation requires the Defense Department to develop an assessment of future threats to national security for the 20 year period beginning in fiscal year 2005. This threat assessment forms the basis for troop end strength and major force structure required to address the threat, and the infrastructure required to support this force. Then, using that information, the Department of Defense is required to identify the infrastructure that it considers "excess" and make recommendations for closure or realignment.⁶

BRAC provides a singular opportunity to reshape Defense infrastructure to optimize military readiness. The BRAC 2005 process will help find innovative ways to consolidate, realign, or find alternative uses for current facilities to ensure the U.S. continues to field the best-prepared and best-equipped military in the world. BRAC will enable the U.S. military to better match facilities to forces, meet the threats and challenges of a new century, and make the wisest use of limited defense dollars.

—Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
November 15, 2002

The requirement to project twenty years into the future to determine force structure goes beyond the horizon in previous rounds of five years. This longer term view, the changed criteria that focus on a more joint-oriented defense department, and the changed oversight reporting structure form the basis of the transformation forcing function. This round of BRAC will be different in significant ways from previous rounds.

DIRECTION

A primary objective of BRAC 2005, in addition to realigning our base structure to meet our post-Cold War forces structure, is to examine and implement opportunities for greater joint activity. Prior BRAC analysis considered all functions on a service-by-service basis and therefore did not result in the joint examination of functions that cross services. While some unique functions may exist, those functions that are common across the Services must be analyzed on a joint basis.

—Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
November 15, 2002

At a minimum, BRAC 2005 must eliminate excess physical capacity; the operation, sustainment and recapitalization of which diverts scarce resources from defense capability. However, BRAC 2005 can make an even more profound contribution to transforming the Department by rationalizing our infrastructure with defense strategy. BRAC 2005 should be the means by which we reconfigure our current infrastructure into one in which operational capacity maximizes both warfighting capability and efficiency.

—Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
November 15, 2002

As the Secretary of Defense indicates in his statements above, the focus of the 2005 BRAC process is markedly different from the previous rounds that focused primarily on reducing expenditures. He is very clear in his direction to the senior defense leadership and the Defense Department as a whole that this is about transforming the force, improving joint operations, and eliminating redundancy. His memorandum 'Transformation through Base Realignment and

Closure' sets the stage for the 2005 BRAC and created the senior leadership oversight organizations to ensure it functions beyond the role of cost reduction.⁷

OVERSIGHT

In previous BRAC rounds joint recommendations were a consideration but the structure of the oversight and the reporting process allowed the Services to disregard the recommendations of the Joint Cross Service Groups (JCSG). The seven function-based JCSGs review activities that are common to all services with the specific goal of determining cross-service efficiencies and opportunities to further joint interoperability.⁸ During BRAC 2005, the JCSGs are focused in the specific areas of industrial, technical, headquarters and support activity, medical, intelligence, education and training, and supply and storage.⁹ Under the old structure, the JCSG recommendations were made to the Services. In a past BRAC round, a JCSG recommended that several depots be realigned due to overlap in function and excess capacity. However, when the Services' recommendations were sent to the Secretary of Defense, the depot recommendation was not included.¹⁰ Leary of a repeat performance, the current Secretary of Defense has structured the oversight function so that each of the JCSGs reports directly to the Infrastructure Steering Group (ISG). The ISG is chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense (AT&L) and composed of the Assistant Service Secretaries (I&E) and the Vice Service Chiefs, it coordinates efforts between the Services and reports to the Infrastructure Executive Council (IEC). This prevents wholesale dismissal of joint-based recommendations and reduces Service parochialism while giving the Services an opportunity to present/defend Service unique capabilities at the next senior panel, the IEC. The most senior panel in the BRAC process, the IEC is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and composed of the Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs, it reports to the Secretary of Defense.¹¹ The structure, in addition to elevating the importance of the seven cross-service groups, functions to ensure that jointness and transformation will be the central themes of BRAC 2005.

CRITERIA

The BRAC legislation specifies that the selection criteria shall ensure that military value is the primary consideration in making closure and realignment recommendations.¹² It also contains specific considerations that military value must include and other special considerations that the selection criteria must address. "Since the 1991 BRAC, the DoD has used the same, publicly accepted selection criteria to make its closure and realignment recommendations."¹³ The eight criteria for the 2005 BRAC have been changed to incorporate the statutory requirements, stress the Department's capabilities-based approach to performing

missions, and include a major focus in the joint arena.¹⁴ The selection criteria are listed below (italics emphasize changes from the previous round's criteria).

Military Value:

1. The current and future mission *capabilities* and the impact on operational readiness of the Department of Defense's total force, *including the impact on joint warfighting, training, and readiness.*
2. The availability and condition of land, facilities *and associated airspace (including training areas suitable for maneuver by ground, naval, or air forces throughout a diversity of climate and terrain areas and staging areas for the use of the Armed Forces in Homeland Defense missions)* at both existing and potential receiving locations.
3. The ability to accommodate contingency, mobilization, and future *total force* requirements at both existing and potential receiving locations *to support operations and training.*
4. The cost *of operations* and the manpower implications.

Other Considerations:

5. The extent and timing of potential costs and savings, including the number of years, beginning with the date of the completion of the closure or realignment, for the savings to exceed the costs.
6. The economic impact on *existing communities in the vicinity of military installations.*
7. The ability of both the existing and potential receiving communities' infrastructure to support forces, missions, and personnel.
8. The environmental impact, *including the impact of costs related to potential environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities.*

—DoD Final Selection Criteria for Closing and Realigning Installations
12 February 2004

WHY NOW?

This section will explain why BRAC needs to be done now, rather than postponed, as some lawmakers propose. There are seven main reasons why now is the time for BRAC. The first reason is driven by the budget.

DEFICIT SPENDING CAN'T LAST

On November 22, 2003 President Bush signed the FY2004 Defense Authorization bill authorizing a record \$401.3 billion in spending for the military.¹⁵ This bill however did not include the costs of ongoing operations in Afghanistan or Iraq. These operations will require funding through a supplemental authorization in the future. Even without additional spending such as the supplemental authorization, the Congressional Budget Office predicts a record budget deficit of \$477 billion for FY2004.¹⁶ This, combined with last fiscal year's record deficit of \$375 billion raises significant concerns for future spending levels.¹⁷ The fiscal reality is that budget deficits cannot continue indefinitely. Given the ballooning budget deficit – in FY 2003 the U.S. Government spent \$318 billion on interest payments to the holders of the National Debt¹⁸ – even the military is living on borrowed time. In other words, current spending levels cannot continue, it is fiscally unhealthy. BRAC may be a way to harvest savings.

DEFENSE DOLLAR COMPETITION

The second reason is the changing force structure, temporary Army end-strength increase of 30,000 soldiers, increased funding required to support aging equipment and replacements, and increasing entitlements, which all place growing demands on the defense dollar. The competition for dollars often results in reprogramming funds from one category to another to meet the immediate and often operational needs. The upkeep and maintenance fund has been frequently raided in support of operations funding.¹⁹ While the Services are restructuring their installation management organizations to better control these funds, the accounts have never been funded adequately to allow for completion of all required projects. The problem will only get worse as facility maintenance requirements increase due to aging. Supporting excess infrastructure and redundant functions is a drain on resources akin to throwing good money after bad. Excess infrastructure is a hindrance to the future military.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION

The next reason is infrastructure condition. Military construction spending is not keeping pace with the deterioration of older facilities. According to the GAO report on Defense Infrastructure in February 2003, "the military services intended to fund sustainment between 78 and 98 percent of requirements..." and "...DoD-wide facility ratings show that 68 percent of facility classes are in such poor condition that they affect military mission achievement."²⁰ DoD must fully fund maintenance and recapitalization and shed excess infrastructure to reduce the requirements and provide the funding source.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

The fourth reason BRAC must be done now is the changing political landscape. The current administration has demonstrated the political will to see the necessary process through to completion. This being an election year, whether or not the President is reelected should not impact on the process. The legislation is crafted such that the decisions are made in 2005 and the closure round is complete by 2006.²¹ This is a full two years before the next Presidential election and thus the decision is made either in the second term of the current president or early in the first term of the new president. But, Congressional support for BRAC 2005 should not be taken for granted. As addressed earlier, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to kill BRAC 2005. However, given the current projected budget deficits and difficult spending cuts that must be faced in the future, Congress must continue to support the BRAC process.

DEFENSE LEADERSHIP

The fifth reason is the current defense leadership is engaged with a vision and the drive to accomplish the mission. The Secretary of Defense recognizes the need for the savings that base closures provide through reduction of excess infrastructure. Combining and co-locating common functions will reduce infrastructure, foster joint operations, and provide the opportunity to realign installations and command structures to new missions.²² The need to transform the force and posture the Department for the future is paramount.

WORLD LANDSCAPE

The sixth reason is timing and the world landscape. The environment facing today's armed forces could not have been predicted during the last round of BRAC held in 1995. The response to the events of September 11, the ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the world all place a significant demand on our military forces, their equipment, the infrastructure supporting them, and the defense dollar. The demand to develop a more efficient and effective joint force is even more pressing. While today's force faces an increased asymmetrical threat, there still is a lack of a near-term military peer competitor. Without this near-term competitor, now is the best time to take some manageable risk, restructure the military infrastructure and reshape the force to be ready for the major force challenge in the future.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Finally, the initial negative effects of a base closure may be offset by the improving economy. The economy is on a rebound and is projected to grow at an annual rate of 4.8% this

year.²³ The additional jobs created by the improving economy may offset the initial base closing job losses.

OPPORTUNITY

The opportunity in the 2005 BRAC round goes far beyond the cost savings. The specific dollar savings from BRAC will forever be debatable but even if the net savings to the Defense Department is marginal, a restructured infrastructure supporting a more interoperable joint force would be the result. The ability to shape the force to be more effective and at the same time be more efficient is the beauty of BRAC 2005. "Matching the military infrastructure to the defense strategy" makes sense.²⁴ As well as a fiscal factor, BRAC can be a forcing function for joint interoperability. For example, closing one service's aviation training base and consolidating that function at another service's base would result not only in co-location but also foster joint training and operations. Even if we don't save money, we come out ahead we can make the country stronger.

THREATS/CHALLENGES

There are no new arguments against the 2005 BRAC that have not been levied during the previous four rounds. While they are all very real issues/concerns, opinions vary about the validity of these arguments. The Government Accounting Office has published at least two reports concerning the military infrastructure and the effects of BRAC. These reports show that the negative outcomes predicted as a result of BRAC have generally not occurred.²⁵ The arguments against BRAC follow.

JOBS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Base closure or realignment has a significant effect on the local economy and jobs in areas where the base constitutes a large portion of the local payroll (generally small, rural or depressed areas). In other areas (large metropolitan areas), the effects may not even be felt due to the larger and more diversified economy surrounding the installation. It is in those small communities that have a relatively highly educated population that the strongest negative effect is initially felt. These smaller communities also represent the biggest opportunity for recovery. Some communities such as Alexandria, Louisiana have rallied and prospered. The former home of England Air Force Base, they succeeded in courting development on the previous military property and expanded the local economy to above pre-closure levels.²⁶ The GAO report on Military Base Closures in April 2002 found that in the communities housing former installations closed as a result of BRAC, "two economic indicators – the unemployment rate and

the average real per capita income growth rate – show that the majority of communities are doing well compared with average U.S. rates...²⁷

MAINTAINING THE ABILITY TO MOBILIZE

Some opponents argue that since 9-11, the world uncertainty and current level of operations associated with the Global War on Terrorism makes this a poor time to reduce the infrastructure. They argue that we should wait until things settle down to do a BRAC because there is so much uncertainty. The simple answer to this question is yes. Now is the time. The DoD conducted a study in 1999 to determine the impact of the previous four BRAC rounds on the ability to mobilize our forces to the cold war levels of 1987. The “Report on the Effects of Base Closures on Future Mobilization Options” concluded that sufficient infrastructure still existed or could be expanded upon to accommodate an equivalently sized force.²⁸

Concurrent with the BRAC study, the Defense Department is conducting an Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy to address future force positioning outside the Continental United States.²⁹ Some troops may be returning stateside and the study will identify the numbers associated with the move. As noted in the preceding paragraph, the GAO report concluded that the Defense Department possessed sufficient facilities to return to pre-drawdown force levels of 1987. Even if all overseas based troops returned stateside they would not exceed capacity. Again, this capability is one of the main elements to be considered when evaluating whether to close a base. The DoD BRAC process is required to make sure across Services, BRAC does not hamper the ability to deploy forces or mobilization for a future threat.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

One of the most difficult and costly issues to deal with during a base closure is the environmental restoration of the property. Differing views exist as to the requirements or degree of the restoration. Delaying BRAC may delay the time period in which environmental remediation must be done. However, these costs must be paid at some time in the future. An opportunity for cost savings to do environmental remediation sooner rather than later exists due to expected increases in remediation rates and regulatory requirements. Despite the costs, previous closures are yielding recurring savings.³⁰ At a minimum this is a wash and not a reason to delay BRAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congressional and public support is critical to the success of the 2005 BRAC effort. Some say the BRAC process is unfair and political. While removing politics from the process is

impossible, including the local citizens and governments in the process before the closure list is announced will pay dividends. The public must see the process is performed in a fair and equitable manner. The American public is intelligent and patriotic. Presented with the scenario facing the military they may support the need to close a base in their backyard. However, to ensure their support, many of their fears need to be addressed. To have the public view the BRAC process with the positive possibilities in mind is the goal. Improving community acceptance of the BRAC process and reducing the political threat felt by the politician can be accomplished through a variety of measures. Since public and congressional support is critical, the following recommendations focus primarily on how DoD can gain this support.

BUILDING SUPPORT

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Mitigate the threat perception by openly publicizing the successes from previous BRAC rounds. For example, Alexandria, Virginia benefited greatly from the closure of the Army's Cameron Station. The former base has been transformed into expensive housing. As a result upscale development has spread into the adjacent areas and the increased tax base should be capable of supporting more of the city's initiatives. San Diego and Orlando have also capitalized on the closure of installations in their cities. The city of San Diego is want of space to expand their international airport. The previously closed Naval Training Center and/or the Marine Recruit Depot, one of the two currently operating, may be the answer.

One thought is to have a public meeting where success stories related to communities that capitalized on the opportunity presented when their bases were closed are shared. Someone with successful experience from a community similar to the one selected for closure can come and speak to the concerns of the citizens. The fact the BRAC commission visits every installation recommended for closure or realignment provides at least one opportunity for face-to-face meetings between citizens and "the system."

The normal response from a community housing a military base when BRAC proceedings are announced is to muster their forces to determine how to protect their base from closure. Communities attempting to shield their bases from closure have funneled money and other resources into the effort. Some spend their money on lobbyists, others on support improvements. This effort also has a negative consequence of developing an "us vs. them" mindset. It pits the local government against the BRAC process and increases the animosity should the base be selected for closure. It does not support the effort to make the best decision for the military and may not result in the best decision for the community.

Communities that finance infrastructure improvements in support of their base may find themselves frustrated when the base closes despite their efforts. However, the positive is that the infrastructure improvements should also support the follow-on enterprise or reuse. The encroachment regulations and airspace controls being developed in the vicinity of Shaw Air Force Base in Arizona will support the base if it remains but will also support operation of a regional airport were it to be closed and converted in the BRAC process.³¹

Develop installation outreach programs to educate the communities and local governments surrounding military installations as to the challenges facing the base and potential solutions. This could include the status of excess capacity as addressed in the following paragraph. Additionally, it could have the effect of increasing the military value of the installation by garnering community support to achieve improvements in the local infrastructure, zoning adjustment, or restrictions on encroachment. The desire is to take the proactive stance toward the second order consequences as communities attempt to “BRAC proof” their installations. A post-BRAC example is the outreach program at former Fort McClellan in Anniston, Alabama where community is encouraged to be involved in ongoing BRAC environmental activities.³²

CAPITALIZE ON CLOSURE

Engage the BRAC-Political Action Groups on the positive side of the fence. They should be aware of excess capacity in their community’s base and engaged to determine an effective use of the excess capacity. This goes hand-in-hand with the proposal below. Get them to start thinking about how to capitalize on the closure rather than spending all their effort on how to prevent the base from closing. Effort channeled in this manner would be time well spent if the base closes, and would also make acceptance of the base closure easier. Having a “plan B” might reduce the fear of the unknown.

In order to develop local interest and support for the BRAC process, the installation could start incrementally bringing businesses in to occupy its surplus infrastructure in public-private partnership ventures. The businesses would be responsible for facilities upkeep and any required renovation. The government would lease the property at local rates and offset the lease amount by the amount required to improve the property. This effort differs from the “early transfer authority” in that it would be enacted whether or not the base was slated for closure. In this manner, the community is in effect using the excess capacity and has begun to develop alternative uses for the property. If the base were later slated for closure, the community has a view of the beneficial effects of BRAC and is better positioned to take ownership and expand.

This is a win-win scenario for the base, the business, and the local community. A federal government partnership with the local government to enable this proactive use of surplus capacity may require only minor changes in existing law. A possible example of this scenario would be at Letterkenney Army Depot, where the excess warehouse and trucking support facilities could be used by a trucking company and create supporting jobs in the community. This requires the Services in conjunction with the local community to identify excess capacity and aggressively seek to lease it out to the business community.

RAPID TRANSFER AND REUSE

Transfer the property to the local government for disposal or sale. Encourage the state or local government then to sell the property to a developer and apply the proceeds in a manner similar to the economic grants or tax incentives to businesses to establish themselves in the community. The local jurisdiction would also have control over the zoning and planning approval of the property. In this manner, they could establish business parks or other enterprises that yield investment and jobs in their community.

One of the most difficult issues arises when the local community decides to use the property that is declared surplus in a manner different from which it was used by the military. For instance, the local community decides to convert a previous trucking depot into a childcare facility. This mismatch in function of the property draws out the transfer to the community due to a completely different set of environmental concerns than applied while the property was being used as a maintenance facility. The early transfer authority passed in 1996 allows rapid transfer to the community of installation property before all environmental restoration is completed.³³ However, it requires that the property must be suitable for the intended use. To overcome this, the community and installation must work together to lure in-kind businesses so the property can be transferred more quickly. The provision also requires that cleanup not be hampered or delayed by the early transfer and that the governor of the state approves the early transfer.³⁴ A cooperative rather than confrontational reuse plan is key.

Another detriment to the process is the length of time it takes to transfer property from the Defense Department to the local community. This time can be as long as several years. The longer the installation sits idle the more negative impact felt by the local community and the more expense required. Some factors that contribute to the delay in the transfer are environmental cleanup and reuse planning. Too often, the regulatory agency, reuse authorities, developers, and various levels of government are operating with conflicting agendas. Those parties need to work together and may require federal level mediation to force this cooperation.

Having a coordinated contingency plan in place prior to the announcement of the closure list will result in quicker transfer.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Base closure adds to the tax base. While military stationed on a base may supplement the local tax base through federal tax subsidies for schools, the property itself does not pay tax. If a base is closed and later developed by private enterprise the end result is a broader tax base. This increased tax base can then support further community projects. This needs to be explained to the public once closure is announced.

Attempt a macro (or regional) solution. Where possible and still supporting military value and transformation, regional consolidation could close a base and realign a neighboring base to mitigate the effects on the region as a whole. While this may be difficult to execute, it could result in a winning scenario for both the military and the surrounding communities.

Provide need-based economic grants to communities that lose a significant portion of their employment base due to a base closure. These grants would be targeted to job creation in the community and could be used as an incentive to lure economic development into the community. These grants would have a threshold to ensure they were applied only to communities where the military base being closed represents a significant portion of the regions employment. Widely diversified communities with a minimal portion of their employment base attached to the military base would not qualify. The grants would also be provided on a tapered basis where the amount would decrease to zero at some time in the future after the property was transferred. The intent being a transition from grant to earned income from the property.

BEYOND DOD

Expand the BRAC process to the interagency. Just as the Services tend to stovepipe their BRAC scope, so also has DoD missed opportunities to partner with other agencies for BRAC efficiencies. For example, the Department of Homeland Security, which just celebrated its one year anniversary, combined many different agencies and people into one department. Agencies that are now part of the new department include the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Secret Service, the Transportation Security Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Customs Service. Cooperation with this newly formed organization while shaping DoD infrastructure may yield dividends for both departments. For instance, excess capacity on a military installation may be exchanged or used to house some DHS functions. An example where previous military property has been used to support other federal departments is Fort McClellan in Alabama.³⁵

The installation was selected for closure in the 1995 round of BRAC. A portion of the property was transferred to the DHS to establish the Center for Domestic Preparedness that conducts live chemical agent training for the nation's civilian emergency response personnel. However, while this does reduce DoD infrastructure, the continued use as a federal property would not add to the tax base.

Final point; once the closure recommendation has been approved a different party should oversee the implementation of the base closure. This may reduce the feeling of betrayal from the community toward the party responsible for the closure decision.

CONCLUSION

As the next presidential campaign begins we are seeing a glimpse of the budget battles yet to come. While currently only political rhetoric on the campaign ads, the underlying issue is very real. The deficit can not be allowed to grow unchecked. The next administration will be forced to face the deficit and make hard choices. These choices will impact the military budget. In a manner similar to the interest expense to cover the national debt, excess infrastructure robs DoD of funds and opportunity needed to transform and sustain the force. The military cannot afford to support excess infrastructure nor can it afford to miss the opportunity to transform to a more efficient joint capabilities-based force. The time for BRAC is now.

BRAC is an opportunity for the Defense Department and the local community. To realize the full potential of this opportunity requires positive action far in advance of the announcement of the base closure. Strategic partnership between the military, state, and local governments is absolutely required to determine the best outcome. Some of the recommendations provided in this paper will help build this strategic partnership and ease the pain of closures. Most importantly, a positive approach, with a view of the possible and how the community can capitalize on it, will speed the recovery and determine how big and how soon the opportunity is realized. Additionally, an effective strategic partnership will yield dividends beyond the BRAC process. Using this forum the local communities and the military can increase their awareness of the challenges each other faces and work cooperatively to solve those problems. Improved cooperation will result in better bases and better communities.

Ultimately, the success or failure of the 2005 BRAC will be determined in the political arena. The Defense Department can be expected to provide the commission with the best possible infrastructure solution supporting a transformed military to meet the future threat. A more efficient, effective, and joint operating military is worth all of the consternation and political pressure. To reshape the force and the infrastructure supporting it is the ultimate goal of BRAC

2005. This may be our last best opportunity to accomplish the task. The Commission, the Congress, the President and ultimately the people will decide that BRAC is an essential opportunity.

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ENDNOTES

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¹⁵ "President Bush Signs Defense Authorization Bill; S&T Language," 25 November 2003; available from <<http://www.aip.org/enews/fyi/2003/154.html>>; Internet; accessed 7 March 2004.

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¹⁹ Lillie, Stanley and Paul Martin, "Bases of Readiness: Installation Sustainability and the Future of Transformation," *Landpower Essay*, no. 03-2 (July 2003): 8.

²⁰ General Accounting Office, *Defense Infrastructure: Changes in Funding Priorities and Strategic Planning Needed to Improve the Condition of Military Facilities* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, February 2003), 5.

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